connections are older than six months. As on 31.3.2002, there were 1490 cases pending for new telephone connection beyond six months (Area-wise details attached as Statement). However, no case was pending for more than one year. MTNL achieved the reduction of such cases from 8664 (as on 31.3.2001) to 1490 cases (as on 31.3.2002).

Statement

The area-wise break-up of pending cases for new telephone connections beyond six months

Name of Area	No. of cases
Central	Nil
East	Nil
Trans Yamuna	208
North-I	376
North-ll	188
South-I	33
South-ll	220
West-I	465
West-ll	Nil
TOTAL:	1490

Financial Burden of Retirement Benefits

4514. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the press report to the effect that Finance Ministry has opined that the financial burden of retirement benefits of the employees of erstwhile DoT and present BSNL is on the BSNL itself during the current year;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's response thereto;

(c) the financial burden on the BSNL if the Finance Ministry's view is implemented; and

(d) the likely adverse impact as a result thereof in terms of the development programme of the BSNL?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Department of Telecom has conveyed to the Ministry of Finance its view that for the existing pensioners of the Department of Telecom and those of the erstwhile Department of Telecom Services, as well as for the erstwhile Government employees who retire from year to year after taking absorption in the BSNL, for the period that they worked in the Government, the liability for making pension payments is that of the Government. For the period the absorbed employees work in the BSNL, the BSNL is liable to pay pension contribution to the Government at the rates prescribed in the Fundamental Rules. The view of the Department of Telecom has been supported by the Standing Committee of Parliament for Information Technology. However, the Ministry of Finance has taken the view that BSNL has to finance the expenditure incurred by the Government in disbursing pension to existing pensioners of DoT as well as to the Govt, servants transferred to BSNL. The schedule of payments to be made by BSNL to the Government in pension contribution should thus exactly match the amounts paid in pension by the Government.

(c) Rs. 800 crores in 2002-03.

(d) If the entire burden of the retirement benefits relating to erstwhile DoT and BSNL employees is to be borne by BSNL, it would significantly affect the developmental programme of BSNL, which is already burdened by additional financial expenditure like duties and taxes, after corporatisations.